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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 006984

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FOR NEA/ELA AND NEA/I; NSC FOR WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [ARABL](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQ UPDATES: SENIOR-LEVEL VISITS AND OTHER
DIPLOMATIC STIRRINGS

Classified by Minister Counselor for Economic and Political
Affairs William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Local contacts confirmed plans for Iraqi President Jalal Talabani to visit Egypt in mid-December, preceded by a visit by Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari December 3-4. In addition to advancing the President's visit, Zebari will represent Egypt at an Arab League ministerial meeting on Iraq being held in Cairo on December 5. Iraqi Sunni figure Shaykh Harith al-Dhari also visited Cairo recently, using the opportunity to publicly denounce the government of Prime Minister Maliki, and to call for Arab governments to withdraw their recognition of the Maliki government. Al-Dhari reportedly met with EGIS Chief Soliman and Amre Moussa, although neither publicly confirmed their discussions with him. Last, the Iraqi Embassy in Cairo agreed to our proposal to contact the Government of Egypt to encourage it to ban Iraqi television station Al Zawraa from being broadcast on Nilesat. End summary.

Upcoming Senior-Level Visits to Egypt

¶2. (C) The Iraqi Ambassador to the Arab League, Raad al-Alusi, told poloff on November 27 that Iraqi President Talabani would pay an official state visit to Egypt on December 15. The visit, according to al-Alusi, would likely not produce a great deal of substance, but would help improve strained bilateral ties between the two states. Talabani would be preceded to Cairo by his Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, who would visit on December 3-4. Zebari reportedly adjusted his schedule to stay longer in Cairo to represent Iraq at a recently scheduled meeting of Arab foreign ministers who will discuss Iraq. Egyptian MFA Spokesman Alaa Hadidi told poloff on November 27 that Talabani would visit Cairo in December, but that no dates had been set. Hadidi was under the impression that the Iraqis were looking at December 10-12 for the visit, noting that President Mubarak would travel to Germany, Ireland, and France from December 6-10, and that Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit would be in India and Pakistan starting December 15.

Arab League Iraq Committee to Meet

¶3. (C) Foreign ministers representing the Arab League's 10-member Iraq Committee (Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and

Yemen) will meet in Cairo on December 5 to discuss the situation in Iraq. According to AL Secretariat staff member Talal Elamine (protect), Amre Moussa proposed the meeting, following the recent spike in violent attacks inside Iraq, rumors of U.S. rethink on its Iraq strategy, and growing political disaffection among Iraq's Sunni population.

Harith Al Dhari, Other Iraqis to Cairo

¶4. (C) The growing political angst among Iraq's Sunni population and its sympathizers in Egypt was on display during a recent visit to Cairo by Iraqi Association of Muslim Clerics head Sheikh Harith al Dhari. During his visit, to attend a non-governmental religious conference (likely organized by his alma mata Al Azhar University), Dhari publicly denounced the government of Prime Minister Maliki, and called upon Arab governments to withdraw recognition of, and support for, his government. According to the Iraqi Ambassador to the Arab League, al-Dhari met privately with Amre Moussa on November 24 at his private residence; he also saw Al Azhar Shayhk Tantawi, and Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Soliman before departing on November 26 for Amman, Jordan. The meetings were not publicized by either Moussa or the GOE -- a point MFA Spokesman Hadidi emphasized to poloff showed Egypt did not support Al Dhari's approach. Arab League staff pointed out Amre Moussa told the media November 20 he had "received assurances from the Iraqi President and PM Maliki's office that al-Dhari would not be prosecuted, contrary to earlier statements by the Iraqi Interior Ministry. In addition to al-Dhari's visit, the Iraqi Ambassador also said Egypt would host "in two days" prominent Iraqi Sunni politician Tareq al-Hashimi.

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Iraqi Insurgency TV Station on Nilesat

¶5. (C) Poloff also discussed with Iraq's AL Ambassador Raad al-Alusi (protect) on November 27, the issue of Nilesat's broadcasting of Iraqi TV station Al Zawraa, despite injunctions against the insurgency-supporting station inside Iraq. Al-Alusi said that Iraq National Assembly member Mishan al-Jabbouri was the person behind Al Zawraa, accusing the latter of corruption and ties to insurgent groups. Recently, he noted, the Iraqi Cabinet had lifted his Parliamentary immunity, causing Jabbouri to flee to Syria, where he remains. Al Zawraa continues to broadcast on Nilesat, he added, with transmissions sent from a vehicle inside Iraq operated by Jabbouri's son. Al-Alusi further claimed Jabbouri was supported by Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani, who allegedly gave Jabbouri land and millions of dollars, with which he opened a hotel and other businesses in Irbil.

¶6. (C) Separately on November 26, emboff discussed the Zawraa issue with Iraqi Charge Saad Ridha, requesting the latter to press the GOE to remove Zawraa from Nilesat. Ridha promised to send a diplomatic note on the issue, and to follow up with the Egyptians.

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